

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6596

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing for the creation of a sex offender policy board.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Carrell, Regala, Stevens, Marr, Shin, McAuliffe, Brandland and Kilmer).

Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

House Committee on Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness

House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The Washington State Institute for Public Policy has published many papers over the years on sex offender issues at the behest of the Legislature. The Department of Corrections has been asked by the Legislature to perform various tasks related to sex offenders. This summer the Governor convened an ad hoc task force to address the sex offender issues raised in the Zina Linnick homicide. Although various organizations and institutions have dealt with issues related to sex offenders, there has been no single established group to address emerging issues. Other states have instituted sex offender policy boards whose responsibility it is to stay apprised of the best practices, research, and risk management of sex offenders. These boards have been instrumental in those states in informing policy makers about various issues relating to sex offenders.

Summary: The Sentencing Guidelines Commission (SGC) must establish, staff, and maintain a sex offender policy board (board). The board consists of 13 voting members and three non-voting members. The voting members are as follows:

- a representative of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs;
- a representative of the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys;
- a representative of the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers;
- the Chair of the Indeterminate Sentencing Review Board or the Chair's designee;
- a representative of the Washington Association for the Treatment of Sex Offenders;
- the Secretary of the Department of Corrections or the Secretary's designee;
- a representative of the Washington State Superior Court Judge's Association;
- the Assistant Secretary of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration or the Assistant Secretary's designee;
- a representative of the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy;
- a representative of the Association of Washington Cities;
- a representative of the Washington State Association of Counties;
- a representative of the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs; and
- the Director of the Special Commitment Center or the Director's designee.

The non-voting members consist of two members of the SGC chosen by the SGC chair and a representative of the Criminal Justice Division in the Attorney General's Office. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy will act as advisor to the board.

The board must choose its chair by majority vote from among its voting membership. The chair's term is two years. The SGC chair will convene the first meeting of the board.

The members of the board selected by statewide organizations are appointed for three-year terms and serve until their successor is appointed by the organization they represent. The terms of the initial members are to be staggered so that their terms expire after one, two, and three years.

The board has the following duties:

- to stay apprised of research and best practices related to risk assessment, treatment, and supervision of sex offenders, community education regarding sex offenses and offenders, prevention of sex offenses, and sex offender management in general;
- to conduct case reviews on sex offenses as needed to understand the performance of sex offender prevention to response systems or are requested by the Governor, the Legislature, or law enforcement;
- to develop and report on benchmarks that measure performance across the state's sex offender response system;
- to assess and communicate best practices or upcoming trends in other jurisdictions to assess their applicability in Washington; and
- to provide a forum for discussion of issues that requires interagency communication, coordination, and collaboration.

The board is to develop an initial work plan detailing how it will achieve its duties and submit it to the Governor and the Legislature no later than December 1, 2008. The board must annually update the work plan and include reasonable performance measures which indicate whether it is meeting its responsibilities. The board must also report annually to the Governor and the Legislature regarding the board's activities.

The Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee is to conduct a sunset review in 2013.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0	
House	64	30	(House amended)
Senate	47	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 12, 2008